Running head: EVALUATING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: PREPARING FOR

Evaluating Organizational Culture: Preparing for Implementation of a Strategic Planning Process

in the Holland Fire Department

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expression, or writings of another.

Signed:_____

Abstract

Understanding organizational culture and the impact it has on the implementation of strategic planning processes is imperative. The problem researched in this project is that the Holland Fire Department has no current data that identifies the readiness of the organization's culture to embrace the development of a strategic planning process. The purpose of this applied research project was to identify methods and key processes for assessing the readiness of the Holland Fire Department's culture to embrace the development of a strategic planning process. A descriptive research approach was utilized to determine (a) the role organizational culture plays in the implementation of a strategic planning process, (b) characteristics of organizational culture that impede implementation of strategic planning processes, (c) methods and practices available for evaluating the culture of fire service organizations, (d) methods that organizations in West Michigan utilize for evaluating culture, and (e) methods that are available to modify current cultures to create an environment for the development of a strategic planning process. Three groups surveyed provided answers to the research questions and identified that (a) culture plays a role in organizational change and strategic planning, (b) there are inherent characteristics of cultures in organizations that impede the strategic planning process, (c) quantitative and qualitative tools are available for evaluating the culture(s) that exist in an organization, (d) there is limited information available about what West Michigan organizations do to evaluate culture, and (e) tools and practices are available to change cultures so that they can embrace strategic planning. Based on results, culture and strategic planning are related. The Holland Fire Department should begin to evaluate the culture that exists in the department and take steps to change and modify the current culture if needed, to facilitate the implementation of the strategic planning process.

Table of Contents

Appendices

Evaluating Organizational Culture: Preparing for Implementation of a Strategic Planning Process

in the Holland Fire Department

Introduction

Every organization has its own culture. Many use the word culture when referring to the inside information that identifies the social workings of any organization. Culture in this context encompasses the unwritten work rules; social order and general sense of belonging and identity the members of the organization share (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Furthermore, culture includes the values, shared thoughts and norms that exist in a collective manner throughout the organization (Cameron & Quinn).

The fire service is not unique in its culture and it is noted that the same items that define culture exist in every organization. Firefighters may not define culture in these terms; however they are aware of how culture presents itself and how it exists throughout their shift, station and department. De Lisi (2005) notes that this culture becomes quite obvious if one spends any time in the kitchen of a fire station and listens to the informal leadership discuss their views of the fire service. Those who are familiar with the fire service have had the opportunity to hear the errant rants of many of non-ranking leaders when faced with change. A new standard operating guideline (SOG) or a change in the color of uniforms worn by personnel can present a threat to the norm or status quo.

A greater challenge to the culture of an organization is the implementation of a strategic planning process. Organizational culture and strategic planning are inter-related. Bryson (2004) identifies that strategic planning and other changes in an organization regardless of the magnitude will require component changes of the organizations culture. Identifying the culture of an organization is an important part of preparing for the implementation of a strategic

planning process. According to Schein (2004) culture is not a concrete concept however the dynamics that are created as a result of it are strong and if there is a failure to observe and understand them they will take control. A lack of knowledge concerning an organization's culture will make implementation of a strategic planning process or any major changes in that organization challenging and could impact the level of success.

The research contained in this Applied Research Project (ARP) focuses on the evaluation of organizational culture in preparation for the implementation of a strategic planning process. The problem is that the Holland Fire Department has no current data that identifies the readiness of the organization's culture to embrace the development of a strategic planning process. The purpose of this research is to identify methods and key processes for assessing the readiness of the Holland Fire Department's culture to embrace the development of a strategic planning process. This ARP utilizes a descriptive research method to answer the following questions:

1. What role does organizational culture play in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

2. What, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the development of a strategic planning process?

3. What methods and practices are available for evaluating organizational culture of fire service organizations?

4. What methods and practices do other organizations in West Michigan utilize for evaluating organizational culture?

5. What methods and practices are available to modify current organizational cultures that create an environment for the development of a strategic planning process?

The research approach utilized a survey of (a) members of a fire service organization in West Michigan, (b) human resource management organization, and (c) a group of Executive Fire Officer Program students as well as a questionnaire that was developed and sent to three authors of material referenced in this ARP.

Background and Significance

The Holland Fire Department is located in Holland, Michigan approximately 20 miles southwest of Grand Rapids and 2 miles east of the shore of Lake Michigan. A democratic assembly of the male population created the department in 1849 when they met and discussed a home that was struck by lightening and destroyed by fire (Den Uyl, 2008). A committee formed as a result and recommended that (a) a bell be purchased, (b) wells be provided, (c) each household be required to have leather buckets, (d) fines be imposed, and (e) a fire watch be provided (Den Uyl).

Today the department is a combination department, consisting of full-paid and part-paid personnel, operating 3 stations throughout the City of Holland. Two of these stations are staffed 24 hours a day. The current staffing includes 3 Captains, 6 Lieutenants and 14 Firefighters working 56 hour workweeks as well as 30 part-paid Firefighters that respond as needed. In addition the department has a Fire Chief, Fire Marshal and Department Assistant that each work 40 hours per week. The total fire department budget for fiscal year 2010 is $3,047,393 (Holland Fire Department, 2010).

With regard to services, the department provides code enforcement, public education, fire response, emergency medical services and response to hazardous materials incidents. These services are provided over a geographical area of approximately seventeen square miles. The diverse community which began as a settlement for early Dutch immigrants in 1840 (Den Uyl,

2008) currently numbers 34,245, based on a 2006 estimate (United States Census Bureau, n.d., p. 1). In 2009 the department responded to 2,799 incidents: 1,909 or 68.2 percent of these were emergency medical service responses. The City of Holland maintains a Protection Class Rating of 4 from Insurance Services Office (Holland Fire Department, 2010).

The Holland Fire Department has and is currently experiencing a number of challenges and changes that impact the cultural stability of the organization. First, since 2002 the department has seen the retirement and replacement of 7 officers and 10 Firefighters. This represents almost two-thirds of the fulltime personnel. Second, the Training & Safety Officer and Community Involvement Lieutenant have been left vacant due to current economic conditions. This has required the workload and responsibility of two key personnel to be distributed to company officers and line firefighters, creating an increase in workload and responsibility.

Additional influences include the 2009 retirement of the Fire Chief who led the department for 20 years. This set in motion a series of promotions which resulted in the appointment of a Lieutenant to Interim Fire Chief and a line Firefighter to that of an Interim Lieutenant. This reorganization of personnel has been open-ended with no clear timeline or finality for the appointees.

The department is currently in a high state disequilibrium created by threats to the status quo (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Concerns over a pending reorganization of the entire department which could include (a) the consolidation of management, (b) transfer of all emergency medical services to the Holland Police Department, or (c) the complete consolidation of the fire and police departments into a public safety department (The PAR Group Public Management Consultants, 2009, p. 36-51). Other challenges to the cultural stability include an estimated budget deficit in City of Holland's general fund budget projected to be approximately $2 million.

This deficit is predicted to cause layoffs in the department. At this time 4 personnel may be placed on layoff, which will result in a reduction of one-sixth of the fulltime personnel in the department. A full consolidation could result in full-paid staffing at the department being reduced by 9 personnel. This represents just under half of the full-paid fire fighters currently employed by the department.

Consolidation of the fire and police services in the City of Holland will represent a clash of inherent cultures unique to each organization. If not subjected to evaluation and study, the apparent dissimilarity between the two organizations will create barriers and impede the ability of management teams to implement and lead the organizations through change. Change of this magnitude will require a planning and possibly a strategic planning process. Preparation of all personnel as well as an understanding of the cultures will be essential in providing for a successful outcome of such an endeavor.

Other concerns within the Holland Fire Department pertain to the number of subcultures that are shift-based and to some extent nurtured by the Captain of the shift. This has led to problems such as inconsistency, competing agendas and a lack of efficiency with regard to completing collaborative goals that are established on an annual basis. During annual goal setting, personnel have identified the lack of consistency and the need for long-range planning as issues. The department action plan for fiscal year 2009 identifies the need to (a) plan for vehicle replacement, (b) provide a training plan for the department, (c) develop a water response plan with neighboring departments, and (d) develop a plan for the renovation of a fire station (City of Holland, 2008, p. 203). It is noted that the fiscal year 2010 budget contains many of the same type of goals and best defined as a form of operational planning (City of Holland, p. 205).

Wallace (2006) states that operational planning can be reactive when contrasted with strategic planning which is considered proactive. The operational goals established by the Holland Fire Department occur with little or no consideration for an overarching strategy that considers the future needs of the department. Based on this problem the department is beginning to prepare for the implementation of a strategic planning process. The proposed fiscal year 2011 budget for the Holland Fire Department includes an action plan which identifies evaluating the readiness of the department to begin the implementation of a strategic planning process as a goal (City of Holland, 2010).

The first part of the evaluation is to assess the current organizational culture and sub-cultures that exist in the department. Cameron and Quinn (2006) suggest that cultural differences or subunits in an organization can cause fragmentation that will diminish the effectiveness of an organization. To be successful with the strategic planning process the department must first identify the cultures that exist.

Identifying organizational culture and understanding the process of change is a goal of the *Executive Development* course. The course furthermore supports the need to evaluate cultures within an organization and identify when the culture needs to be changed (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2006, chap. 7). The research seeks to identify additional methods and practices to meet this goal as it relates to the process of strategic planning.

There is an additional relationship between the research problem and the United States Fire Administration (USFA) goal to improve the fire and emergency services' professional status. The research also supports the first of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives established by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. This is to "define and advocate the need for cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management,

supervision, accountability and personal responsibility" (National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, ¶ 1). Any strategic planning processes in the Holland Fire Department must include considerations for Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives and evaluation of the culture.

<div align="center">Literature Review</div>

A literature review was conducted to determine the current context and discourse concerning the information relevant to each of the five research questions presented. This took place between January and April of 2010. The review was conducted utilizing various sources of print and electronic format. To identify these sources an extensive search began by utilizing the online card catalogue at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) located on the campus of the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, MD. The researcher was further assisted by Bernie Mulhern at the LRC on January 24, 2010.

Additional information concerning pertinent literature was gathered by the researcher at the Herrick District Library in Holland, MI through the use of their card catalogue, interlibrary loan program with other Michigan libraries and assistance from their staff. Other information was found through a review of a number of online databases available through the Herrick District Library and the Van Wylen Library located on the campus of Hope College, in Holland, MI. In addition to the resources noted, online search engines such as Bing, Google, Yahoo and others were utilized to complete a thorough review of this topic.

To complete the literature review it was necessary for the researcher to search a number of online book stores and purchase books that were either not accessible through the interlibrary loan process or would have required a substantial amount of time to receive. Many of these sources are seminal works that pertain to both organizational culture and strategic planning which will have application when the researcher implements the recommendations of this ARP.

As prerequisite to reviewing the literature is to have working definition of organizational culture. Harrison & Stokes (1992) suggest that culture "is the pattern of beliefs, values, rituals, myths and sentiments shared by the members of an organization" (p. 1). Culture has a great influence on most facets of an organization; it prescribes how the decision-making process occurs and how the organization is influenced by the environment in which it exists (Harrison & Stokes). Although not as specific Schein (2004) defines organizational culture as:

a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its

problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to

be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to

perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 17).

Schein (2004) furthermore suggests that culture is best identified in a group by observing the extent to which certain characteristics exist in that group and are visible to the observer. These characteristics or levels to be observed are referred to as "artifacts, espoused beliefs and underlying assumptions" (Schein, figure 2.1).

The first research question seeks to identify the role of organizational culture in the implementation of a strategic planning process. Wallace (2006) recognized that understanding the values of an organization is an important part of any planning process and furthermore suggests that values create the basis for the culture and collective beliefs that exist in an organization. A correlation of values and culture is made however emphasis is placed on understanding and evaluating the values of the organization not culture.

According to Bryson (2004), a significant part of the strategic planning process, calls for identifying what is referred to as mandates of the organization and its' "mission and values"(p. 37). An important advantage of defining the mission of the organization is that those making the

decisions must pay close attention to culture along with other items so that errors are not made as they begin to create the strategies for the organization (Bryson). The strategic planning process by nature will bring about change in any organization. Any significant change in strategy will also involve some change in culture, which takes time (J. M. Bryson (personal communication, February 1, 2010).

When strategic planning or other planning process is introduced into organizations, consistency with the culture of the group can determine the rate of success or failure (National Defense University, Department of Strategic Decision Making and Executive Information, n.d.). Raps (2004) identifies that the success rate for the implementation of strategic plans is 10% to 30%. This is due to a number of factors including organizational culture. Having an understanding of culture is so critical to strategic planning it is important that management take time to relax or thaw the organization and the values that make up its culture so that those effected can grasp why change is important and necessary (Raps).

Galpin (1996) identifies that the procedural, operational and systematic changes that organizations are contemplating have direct connections to the culture that exists in the organization. To be effective intended changes may need to be passed through "a 'cultural screen' to identify how best to implement and embed changes in an organization" (Galpin, 1996, p. 84). The screen that Galpin (1996) refers to is constructed of a combination of 10 elements that he defines as elements of culture (p. 85). This framework is then utilized to determine the culture and identify the parts of the organization's culture that are important as it embarks on change (Galpin).

In contrast to the impact of culture on strategic planning, others have suggested that strategic planning and strategic management can have an influence on organizational culture.

Plant (2008) describes holistic strategic planning as a process that views planning in a manner that includes a number of related components in an organization. This view of planning provides more than a document and serves as a means to impact the culture of an organization (Plant).

The second research question focuses on what components of culture may impede the implementation of a strategic planning process. The literature suggests that consideration be given to the very nature of culture and the components of the culture itself that can act as a roadblock to any change. Although referring to culture and strategic planning in the context of colleges and universities Sevier (2002) identifies a number of characteristics about their cultures that can influence strategic planning processes in any organization. Some of these included (a) the inability to recognize that a strategic plan is needed, (b) assumptions that the organization is better than what it is, (c) non-disclosure or secrecy, (d) a general lack of personal accountability, and (e) the need to focus blame or punish members for failures or poor performance (Sevier, ¶ 3-9).

Peters (1993) suggests that culture, strategic plans, policies and procedures need to be in alignment to have a functional and productive organization. The author also states that strong cultures have trouble adapting to changes, leading to a lack of alignment (Peters). Strong cultures are often handicapped by their focus on the organization and they do not always identify clues or warning signs that indicate changes that are occurring around them, hence they are unable to respond until they are faced with a crisis (Peters).

Kajee (2007) says that in general, culture can be a problem when the values and beliefs that constitute it interfere with goals and objectives of the organization. The author notes that due to the characteristics and influence of culture, individuals or groups may act and behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the stated goals and objectives of an organization (Kajee). Levin

& Gottlieb (2009) note that the challenge for leaders of any organization is that by nature cultures do not easily change due to the way they evolve and become entrenched in an organization over time. The literature indicates that the characteristics and nature of organizational cultures can impede the strategic planning process.

The third research question seeks to identify methods and practices that are available for evaluating the culture of fire service organizations. Methods for identifying cultures can be divided into two approaches the first being qualitative and the second quantitative (Aiman-Smith, 2004). Qualitative approaches involve viewing and seeking further information about the visible components of culture which include (a) ceremonies, rights and rituals; (b) stories and myths, (c) heroes, (d) language, and (e) symbols (Aiman-Smith, p. 4). The quantitative approach utilizes surveys and questionnaires to assess the cultures that exist in an organization. Aiman-Smith (2004) identifies some examples of these survey methods which include the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) and the Organizational Culture Index (OCI).

Further study of the literature finds some examples of qualitative approaches to evaluating culture. Coleman (2007) provides a number of questions that chief officers and others can utilize so that they may begin to identify and assess the cultural environment of their departments. This assessment method encourages fire service managers to begin to ask 42 questions of themselves that help define the visual cues that are manifestations of culture as it exists in the organization.

Schein (2004) identifies that there are a number of pitfalls that researchers should be aware of when administering questionnaires and surveys. These methods will not provide a true picture of culture due to limitations of the survey itself. Rather than survey a group Schein

suggests that a clinical research model be utilized as a tool to gather cultural data in an organization (Schein). This can be more effective in gathering information because data is freely provided by the members who feel they have something to gain by sharing information or they played a role in motivating the in the process (Schein). In addition, Schein (2004) also suggests that the best way to gather cultural data from an organization is to assemble small groups that are representative of the organization and encourage them to discuss the components of their culture such as artifacts, values and assumptions.

In addition to qualitative methods, the literature provides a number of quantitative methods for evaluating culture. Cameron & Quinn (2006) provide a survey technique referred to as the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). This instrument is a survey made up of 6 questions that identify the current culture that exists and also seek to determine the desired culture for the future (Cameron & Quinn). Once the survey is completed the responses are utilized to create a graphic representation of where the organization is in relation to 4 major types of cultures, which are referred to as clan, adhocracy, hierarchy and market (Cameron & Quinn).

A second type of quantitative assessment has been developed by Dr. Roger Harrison and Herbert Stokes. This assessment requires respondents to answer 15 questions and to indicate for each question what the existing culture is and what the preferred or desired culture is (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). The scoring is then utilized to determine where an organization is in relationship to four types of cultures identified as power, role, achievement and support orientations (Harrison & Stokes).

The fourth research question focuses on what methods and practices organizations in West Michigan utilize for evaluating culture. The literature pertaining to this question is limited.

The Haworth Corporation of Holland, Michigan published a white paper on what culture is, how to measure it and the influence it has on the design of office concepts and development of workspaces (Tharp, 2009). The paper references the OCAI which has been developed by Cameron & Quinn and states that the instrument provides a valid and reliable approach to assessing culture (Tharp).

The final research question seeks to identify practices that are available to modify current organizational cultures that create an environment for the development of a strategic planning process. Cameron & Quinn (2006) have identified a 6-step process for changing culture in an organization in a manner that reduces resistance and cultivates involvement of the participants. In summary the process involves determining the current culture, defining the preferred culture for the future and developing strategies and plans to achieve the desired change (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, p. 90).

In the context of public fire service organizations, De Lisi (2005) suggests that when implementing or maintaining cultural change leaders should (a) communicate the guiding values and principles that shape decision making, (b) identify behaviors that are consistent with the value system of the organization, (c) provide a feedback mechanism for personnel to gauge their performance, (d) provide a mechanism for positive reinforcement of desired behavior and performance that is consistent with the establish culture, and (e) take personal ownership in leading the organization towards the preferred culture (p. 119). De Lisi notes that the best way for leaders to successfully change culture is to do so by example and to identify and punish those who exhibit behavior that is inconsistent with the cultural goal (De Lisi).

Levin & Gottlieb (2009, abstract) present a methodology for changing culture in an organization to improve performance. The process is presented in the form of principles and

practices for creating a culture that is inline with strategic goals and plans of an organization.

The authors suggest 6 principles for creating a broad framework or strategy with which culture

adjustments can be made (Levin & Gottlieb, p. 33). To accomplish this 8 practices are suggested.

These are as follows: (a) establish infrastructure and oversight, (b) define the preferred culture,

(c) conduct a culture gap audit, (d) ensure leadership modeling, (e) manage priority culture

realignment levers, (f) promote grassroots efforts, (g) integrate into priority strategic initiative,

and (h) assess progress (Levin & Gottlieb, p. 36-44).

In summary the literature suggests that culture and strategic planning are related and to be

effective in implementing a strategic planning process, consideration must be given to culture.

Efforts should be made to identify what it is and how it can be changed or managed in order to

facilitate a successful planning process. It is evident that the culture(s) that exists in any

organization should be identified and analyzed prior to any proposed change and not just in

preparation for implementation of a strategic planning process. Finally, strategic planning,

depending on the process utilized can impact culture and perhaps be a mechanism for changing

culture.

The literature furthermore identifies characteristics of culture that impede the

implementation of a strategic planning process. The very nature of culture and how it evolves

creates a resistance to change. Strategic planning can represent a change in how an organization

operates and will present a potential threat to the status quo and thus challenge the current

culture.

The qualitative methods for evaluating culture focus on identifying the characteristics of

cultures in an organization and require those studying it to key in on the values, artifacts,

symbols and assumptions. This is normally conducted by working with small groups and

facilitating an opportunity for discussion of these cultural representations. Quantitative methods utilize a number of surveys or questionnaires that focus on identifying what respondents believe to be the current culture and desired culture. The responses are then compared in relationship to defined cultures and orientations. Two of these quantitative methods include the OCAI developed by Cameron & Quinn and the diagnostic tool developed by Harrison & Stokes.

There is limited literature that identifies what practices are utilized in West Michigan to evaluate culture. Locating literature that discusses practices in this area proved to be difficult but it is evident that there is at least one organization that is utilizing the OCAI. The information noted in the reference focuses on the impact of culture on the design and set up of offices and work stations.

Methods and practices for changing culture in organizations or groups appears to be based on identifying what culture exists, defining the desired culture and devising methods and structures in which the leadership of an organization can reinforce and lead the organization to the successful accomplishment of established goals and strategic plans. Some of the methods are more formal than others.

<center>Procedures</center>

This research effort answers the questions identified in the introduction section through a descriptive approach. To facilitate this, the researcher utilized (a) an extensive literature review, (b) written online survey and (c) personal electronic mail correspondence with 3 authors of references cited in the ARP.

The purpose of the survey utilized as part of this ARP, was to gather information pertaining to organizational culture and strategic planning, from organizations near the Holland Fire Department. The effort sought to identify what fire service organizations and private non-

fire service organizations are doing to evaluate culture in preparation for the implementation of strategic planning processes. It also provided an opportunity for respondents to share what they have done in their own organizations to change culture.

The survey was developed based on the research questions and created by utilizing an online survey service called Survey Monkey. This service allows an individual to create an account and develop a number of different surveys. It furthermore assists in the creation of reports to provide a summary of data collected. The researcher subscribed to the Pro Plan offered by the site which provided flexibility in survey design and allowed for more than 100 respondents (Survey Monkey, n.d.). This electronic format was utilized to provide a low cost mass distribution to the groups identified which also allowed for easy collection of data. It was designed to gather information that could help provide answers to all 5 research questions identified in the introduction. The survey asked respondents the following:

1. The type of organization; public or private.

2. The size of the organization.

3. If the organization has implemented a strategic planning process.

4. If the organization evaluated the culture of the organization as a preparation for strategic planning.

5. If the organization believed that culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process.

6. If the organization was aware of and used the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

7. Characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of the strategic planning process.

8. Steps the organization may have implemented to change the culture of the

organization and if they worked.

The researcher developed the survey in a manner that allowed for an evaluation of the

respondents based on the size their organization, whether it was public or private and if the

organization considered culture as part of the strategic planning process. Questions referring to

the OCAI were based on a review of the literature (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). The OCAI is one

example of a number of different tools available however it is being considered for use by the

researcher to evaluate the culture of the Holland Fire Department.

The survey does gather additional data that is not necessary to answer the research

questions identified in this ARP. It is included in the appendices however will be used as the

researcher begins to implement recommendations provided as a result of the research effort.

With regard to selecting survey respondents, it was determined that three separate groups

would be utilized. These included (a) the *Executive Development* students that attended the

course with the researcher in September of 2009, (b) the Western Michigan Association of Fire

Chiefs (WMAFC), and (c) the Lakeshore Human Resource Management Association (LHRMA).

The *Executive Development* group provided an opportunity to determine how peers address the

issue of culture and strategic planning and furthermore gave the researcher the ability to test the

survey prior to distribution to two other groups. The information gathered from this peer group is

included in the results section for comparison.

The other two organizations were familiar to the researcher and provided the opportunity

to compare public fire services with private organizations. The LHRMA membership, which

consists primarily of human resource managers and directors, would most likely have an

understanding of organizational culture and the strategic planning process. Likewise, WMAFC

members, as executives of fire service organizations, should have a working knowledge of these items and could respond to the questionnaire in an informed manner with regard to their departments.

The total number of respondents needed was calculated to provide a 95 percent level of confidence and adjustments were made to correct for a 20 percent non-response rate (USFA, 2006). To facilitate a higher response rate an electronic mail distribution was utilized to send the survey to every member of each organization that had a valid electronic mailing address. The total populations and required number of respondents are identified in table 1.

Table 1

Sample sizes and total responses for ARP survey of Executive Development, WMAFC and LHRMA

Definition	NFA Executive Development	WMAFC	LHRMA
1. Total Population	23	123	155
2. Required Respondents for 95% Confidence Level	22	93	111
3. Required Respondents for 20% Non-Response Rate	NA	112	133
4. Total Number of Surveys Distributed	23	123	155
5. Total Number of Respondents	22	30	21
6. Total Received as Percentage of Total Required for 20% Non-Response Rate	NA	27%	19%

Once the groups were identified, personal contact was made with executive board members of the WMAFC and LHRMA to secure permission for distribution of the survey to their memberships. Both organizations were helpful and supportive of the research effort and the survey was mailed electronically to all potential respondents with a cover letter which contained a hyperlink to the survey, hosted by the Survey Monkey website (see Appendixes A and B for examples of the letters). The use of a link provides anonymity and allows for a random response. Surveys began to be distributed electronically on February 6, 2010 through February 11, 2010 (see Appendix C for an example of the survey). It was requested that all responses be returned by March 29, 2010 so that the results could be evaluated.

In addition to surveying the three groups noted, a questionnaire was developed and sent to 3 authors of publications referenced in this ARP. The questionnaire was based upon the 5 research questions and was directed to the authors based on their expertise in the areas of strategic planning and organizational culture. It was believed that these authors could provide information from a non-fire perspective.

The questionnaires were provided to (a) Dr. John Bryson, (b) Dr. Kim Cameron and, (c) Dr. Roger Harrison. The document was sent by electronic mail and responses were received by all three authors (see Appendix D for an example of the questionnaire). Bryson and Cameron provided direct answers to all of the questions provided. Harrison responded to the electronic mail request and preferred that the researcher contact him directly to discuss the questions provided. On Monday, April 5, 2010 the researcher conducted a video call with Harrison. Due to scheduling and time constraints not all of the questions were answered. The discussion focused on what organizational culture is and how it relates to change and strategic planning. Some limited discussion regarding low return rates for the surveys distributed to the WMAFC and

LHRMA populations occurred. The purpose of this was to identify if there is a correlation between the response rate and the knowledge and understanding of the subject by the individuals being surveyed. Further conversation with Harrison prior to the completion of this ARP was not possible. It is expected that further dialogue with Harrison will occur as the researcher begins to implement recommendations contained in this ARP.

The methods utilized for this procedure created some limitations that prevented the researcher from answering the research questions with a 95% level of confidence. Response rates from the WMAFC and LHRMA were approximately 13.5% to 15%. The data received cannot be considered representative of the populations identified however it can be utilized in a directional manner or a guide to what may be going on in the organizations selected for the survey. To increase the response rate the researcher employed a number of strategies to obtain responses from the WMAFC. First, the researcher sent four requests to the membership through an on line communication tool referred to as TexCom.com (Tinney, C. M., 2010).These requests were issued by the President and Secretary Treasurer of the WMAFC as well as the researcher on February 11, 2010. Second, additional requests were made to the membership on February 15, 2010 and March 13, 2010. These requests again utilized the TexCom.com website as well. Finally, three follow up emails containing the same letter and link were sent to each member with an address on February 19, 2010, February 28, 2010 and March 26, 2010.

The response from LHRMA was low as well and despite ongoing efforts remained low in comparison to the size of the total population. In addition to the initial email, additional effort was provided to increase the number of respondents from the LHRMA group. These included the attendance at a general membership meeting on February 25, 2010 where the researcher provided a 10 minute presentation about the research effort and an offer to share data through an

additional presentation to the group. During this meeting the researcher solicited member

participation with distribution of paper copies of the survey and offered to purchase a 1 year

membership to the organization if 30 or more survey responses were received.

On February 28, 2010 the researcher made a final request to LHRMA to distribute the

survey through their email list. Despite these efforts only been 21 responses were received. The

low response rate precluded the ability to compare and contrast between populations such as

public and private. In addition the data makes it difficult to identify trends that may occur based

on the size of the organization. The low response rate to the survey is addressed further in the

discussion section of this ARP. It is believed that the low response rate in the WMAFC and

LHRMA groups is significant and warrants further analysis.

<div align="center">Results</div>

As identified in the procedures, a descriptive research method was utilized which

employed a survey of Executive Development, WMAFC and LHRMA populations to identify

possible answers to the research questions. In addition a questionnaire was provided to Bryson,

Cameron and Harrison; authors referenced in the ARP. The following is a summary of survey

responses as they relate to each research question (see Appendices E, F & G for complete survey

responses).

Research Question 1 Results

What role does organizational culture play in the implementation of a strategic planning

process? Survey question six was utilized to gather information pertaining to the research

questions. Based on survey responses it is evident that all three populations believe that

organizational culture plays a role in the strategic planning process. Data provided in response to

survey question six is presented in table 2.

Respondents were requested to provide an explanation for their answer. An analysis of the comments provided by the *Executive Development* group revealed that the majority of the respondents believe that culture plays a role in the implementation of the strategic planning process. Comments suggest that culture impacts everything inside an organization and that to be successful a culture of change is needed. It is also identified that culture is a fundamental part of any organization and if not acknowledged and understood any attempt to create change will be destined for failure. For specific comments see Appendix H.

Table 2

Survey Question 6: Do you believe organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

Response	Executive Development Group	WMAFC Group	LHRMA Group
1.Yes	95.5%	86.7%	90.5%
2. No	4.5%	13.3%	9.5%

Note. For specific data see survey results in Appendices E, F and G.

The majority of the WMAFC group also identify that culture does play a role in the implementation of strategic planning process. Responses suggest that culture exerts itself on everything in an organization and it impacts any potential change. It is also suggested that culture can define how much change can be handled by an organization. One comment states that the most important step to being successful in the strategic planning process is to address culture. For specific comments see Appendix I.

LHRMA respondents identified the same concern as the other two groups surveyed. Responses identify culture will determine how an organization will accept change as well as identifying what change may be needed. One response indicates that culture can be utilized to

achieve positive results in the organization. This is a positive view of culture not identified in

comments from the other groups (see Appendix J).

An additional component utilized to answer research question 1 is the email questionnaire

that was provided to the authors of reference utilized for this ARP (see Appendices K & L).

Bryson, author of Strategic Planning for Public and Private Organizations, suggested that

"culture has a major impact on what people are willing to 'hear' and do. Every successful,

significant strategy change also involves a change in culture. That is one reason why such

changes take time" (J. M. Bryson (personal communication, February 1, 2010). Cameron stated

that "A majority of attempts to change organizations fail because of cultural resistance. Culture

is a crucial factor in ensuring a transition from what we are now, or where we are now, and

where we want to go, or what we want to be, as a result of strategic planning" (K. S. Cameron,

personal communication, March 2, 2010). As noted in the procedures time did not allow for a

complete response from Harrison.

Research Question 2 Results.

What if any characteristics of organizational culture impede the development of a

strategic planning process? Survey question nine was structured to require respondents to

identify what characteristics of culture they believe impact strategic planning processes. A

sample of these responses is provided below. For a listing of all comments see Appendices H, I

and J.

The Executive Development group identifies that (a) education, (b) tradition, (c)

generation gaps, and (d) an unwillingness to change as characteristics of culture that impede the

implementation of a strategic planning process. This group also identifies that culture does not

like to change and strategic planning is a process for change therefore many will not embrace the process. Responses for this group can be found in Appendix H.

WMAFC group respondents identify (a) resistance to change, (b) fear of change, (c) tradition, and (d) a lack of education on the part of leaders in the organization as characteristics of their cultures that impede the implementation of a strategic planning process. Members also cite that the level of progressiveness and the lack of experiences outside the organization have an impact on any implementation effort. All responses by WMAFC can be found in Appendix I.

The LHRMA group identifies that (a) trust, (b) negative attitudes, (c) experience levels of the membership, and (d) environments that are too accommodating, can be characteristics of cultures that will impede the implementation of a strategic planning process. Many of the other responses provide by this group are consistent with those offered by the Executive Development and WMAFC groups. Further information regarding comments by this group can be found in Appendix J.

Bryson and Cameron also commented on this research question. Bryson identified that "cultures need to be reasonably open to information from within, from elsewhere and to learning" (J. M. Bryson, personal communication, February 1, 2010). Cameron identified that "It is not specific 'characteristics' of a culture that inhibit development, it is organizational culture itself. Culture identifies implicit assumptions, norms, behaviors, and artifacts, and all may serve to inhibit change" (K. S. Cameron, personal communication, March 2, 2010)

Research Question 3 Results

What methods and practices are available for evaluating the organizational culture of fire service organizations? Survey question five was structured to gather data that would indicate if organizations evaluated the culture in preparation for the implementation of a strategic planning

process and if so comment on what method(s) were utilized to do so. Table 3 identifies the

percentage of respondents that evaluated culture as a preparation for strategic planning.

Table 3

Responses to Survey Question Five: In preparation for the implementation of the strategic

planning process was the organizational culture of your organization evaluated?

Response	Executive Development Group	WMAFC Group	LHRMA Group
1.Yes	50.0%	20.0%	23.8%
2. No	31.8%	23.3%	33.3%
3. NA	18.2%	56.7%	42.9%

Note. For specific data see survey results in Appendices E, F and G.

Survey respondents that answered in the affirmative were asked to comment on which

method or practice they utilized to evaluate the culture of their organization. Summary of

responses for each survey population is provided. As with previous results full text and complete

responses can be found in Appendices H, I and J.

Executive Development respondents identify surveys and focus groups as a means of

evaluating culture. Some appear to employ a combination of surveys and team meetings to

conduct an assessment of culture in their organizations. These responses can be found in

Appendix H.

The WMAFC respondents identify an evaluation that is part of the Center for Public

Safety Excellence (CPSE) accreditation program, formerly CFAI, and reference employee

surveys that gather information pertaining to the needs and wants of members inside and outside

the organization. In summary there is limited information from this group as to what methods

departments in West Michigan are utilizing to evaluate culture. Additional information can be found in Appendix I.

LHRMA group respondents identify (a) informal discussions, (b) comparison with other organizations, and (c) focus groups conducted by outside consultants as methods and practices for evaluating culture in their organizations.

Cameron responded to this question and stated "The most well-used assessment instrument is the OCAI" (K. S. Cameron, personal communication, March 2, 2010). This instrument was developed by Cameron and Quinn and is identified in the Literature Review of this ARP. In contrast, Bryson states that "surveys can help, but you can also just ask groups of people to talk about what's good about our culture, what's not, and what would you like to see change. Use a facilitated process and flipcharts, or do affinity diagrams" (J. M. Bryson, personal communication, February 1, 2010).

Research Question 4 Results

What methods and practices do other organizations in West Michigan utilize for evaluating organizational culture? As noted in the procedures section, the WMAFC and LHRMA survey populations were selected based on their location in West Michigan. Responses to research question three, noted above, identify the methods and practices that these two groups utilize. Although limited in their responses the groups suggest surveys, accreditation processes and focus groups to evaluate culture.

With regard to this research question, survey question seven asked respondents if they were aware of the OCAI. This was utilized to identify the level of use, if any, in West Michigan. Table 4 provides a tabulation of responses received from all three survey groups.

Table 4

Responses to Survey Question Seven: Are you aware of the Organizational Culture Assessment

Instrument (OCAI)?

Response	Executive Development Group	WMAFC Group	LHRMA Group
1.Yes	22.7%	6.7%	9.5%
2. No	77.3%	93.3%	90.5%

Note. For specific data see survey results in Appendices E, F and G.

In addition to the data in this table, survey results for question eight suggest that this

model is not in use in West Michigan. It is identified that only two of the Executive

Development group have utilized the OCAI.

Research Question 5 Results

What methods and practices are available to modify current organizational cultures that

create an environment for the development of a strategic planning process? Survey question 10

was developed to obtain information that can provide answer to this research question. The

survey question first asks if respondents have implemented steps to change the culture of the

organization. Table 5 provides results to part one of the question.

Respondents that answered in the affirmative were then asked to briefly explain the

purpose and steps employed to change the culture in their organization. Executive Development

respondents state that (a) recreation of mission and values, (b) CFAI accreditation as a

mechanism of change, and (c) the introduction of core values have been utilized to change

culture in their respective organizations (See Appendix H for responses). The WMAFC group

identifies (a) the creation of vision and mission statements with accompanying goals to get there,

(b) demonstrating the right thing and encouraging other to do the same, (c) better

communications, and (d) development of departmental compasses as methods and practices to change their cultures. (See Appendix I for responses)

Table 5

Responses to Survey Question 10: Has your organization implemented steps or processes to change the culture of the organization?

Response	Executive Development Group	WMAFC Group	LHRMA Group
1.Yes	36.4%	40%	61.9%
2. No	63.6%	60%	38.1%

Note. For specific data see survey results in Appendices E, F and G.

Methods and practices utilized by LHRMA include (a) restructuring of the organization, (b) the creation of vision with employee engagement, (c) implementation of a coaching method that educates employees on what is best for them and the strength of the company, and (d) disguising change. In reference to disguising change, the respondent referred to it as small difference in operation. (See Appendix J for responses)

This question was posed to Cameron and Bryson as well. In response Cameron provided a paper that discusses the process of change in a manner that is identical to what is noted in the literature review. According to Bryson, "It also helps for people to go see truly superb counterpart organizations and talk with people there about their culture. Then come back and talk about what they'd like to change about their own culture" (J. M. Bryson, personal communication, February 1, 2010). In addition it is suggested that change will require leadership.

Survey question 11, asked respondents that stated they have taken steps to change their organizational culture to identify if they were successful in making a change. The responses are identified in table 6.

Table 6

Responses to Survey Question 10: If you answered yes to question 10 and implemented methods or steps to change the culture of our organization, where you successful?

Response	Executive Development Group	WMAFC Group	LHRMA Group
1.Yes	27.3%	33.3%	42.9%
2. No	9.1%	10.0%	00.0%
3. NA	63.6%	56.7%	57.1%

Note. For specific data see survey results in Appendices E, F and G.

It is evident that many of the organizations represented by the respondents have not taken steps to change their culture however those that have appear to have some success with doing so. Due to the format of the survey it is not possible to identify what methods and practices were utilized by those organizations that were successful.

Discussion

After a review of the literature and analysis of data collected through survey procedures, it is recognized that organizational culture plays a significant role in the implementation of strategic planning processes. The majority of the survey respondents acknowledge that culture has an influence on this process. Bryson (2004) and Wallace (2006) validate the findings of the surveys and do acknowledge that culture is important to consider when implementing a strategic planning process.

Other authors suggest that planning and changes that are not in alignment with or consistent with the cultures that exist are doomed to fail (National Defense University, Department of Strategic Decision Making and Executive Information, n.d.). Raps (2004) and Galpin (1996) discuss the importance of analyzing evaluating culture as an essential part of the strategic planning process and any change. It is suggested that comparing proposed changes in comparison to the culture that exists is important to determining how to best implement change in any organization (Galpin, 2008).

Survey respondents do suggest that to be successful with strategic planning, a change in culture may be needed and it is apparent that any change in an organization will most likely falter due to the failure of management to understand organizational culture. Based on this it is apparent that the role of organizational culture in the implementation of the strategic planning process is significant and it can lead to success or failure of such an effort.

Characteristics of some cultures that impede the implementation of a strategic process include the failure to recognize the need to change, secrecy and the strength of the culture in the organization (Servier, 2002, Peters, 1993). Survey respondents identify that cultures that have a resistance to change or a fear of change will create a challenge for the implementation of the strategic planning process. It also identified that the very nature of culture itself that can inhibit an organization from change (K. S. Cameron, personal communication, March 2, 2010). It appears characteristics or nature of culture itself may impede the implementation process. Schein (2004) explains that cultures evolve out of what organizations do to adapt to change and it becomes a tool that is past on to other. This by nature can lead to rigidity and a resistance to change.

Culture plays such a significant role in change and strategic planning, it is important to identify tools and methods for identifying it. These methods fall into primarily two categories, surveys or small group discussions that focus on the items that makes up culture in an organization (Aiman-Smith, 2004, Schein, 2004). Survey methods identified, include the OCAI developed by Cameron & Quinn and the assessment model identified by Harrison & Stokes (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

It is noted that those surveyed by the researcher for this ARP utilized more informal discussions or clinical research methods that were facilitated by others. This is an approach offered by John Bryson who suggested that facilitated discussions, where people are asked to talk about their culture may be just as effective (J. M. Bryson, February 1, 2010). It is also important to note that survey responses indicate that fire service organizations are not doing much in the area of evaluating culture.

In the context of West Michigan, it is difficult to locate literature that clearly identifies what organizations do to evaluate culture. Tharp (2009) identified that the OCAI is a tool that can be utilized to evaluate organizational culture and that it is important to understand this culture when considering office and workspace layouts in a business environment. It is not clear if the Haworth Corporation, who published the white paper by Tharp, is encouraging the use of the method or utilizing it in their company.

Survey data received from both the WMAFC and LHRMA groups should be representative of West Michigan, however due to limited survey responses it is difficult to make conclusions as to what methods and practices they may be utilizing to evaluate culture. Based on what was provided by WMAFC and LHRMA there is no mention of the specific quantitative methods (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, Harrison & Stokes, 1992) identified in this ARP. It is noted

that only 2 respondents, both from LHRMA, indicated that they were aware of the OCAI. As noted previously, qualitative methods are being used by survey respondents but it appears that there is little being done to evaluate culture in organizations that from the WMAFC.

There research has identified a number of methods identified to change culture or processes. Although not specific to strategic planning these methods offer opportunities to prepare organizations and change culture to facilitate strategic planning processes These appear to focus on defining existing cultures and desired cultures and providing strategies to get there (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, Levin & Gottlieb, 2009). A similar method is suggested by De Lisi (2005), identifies that managers need to communicate guiding principles that direct the organization and create an environment where managers lead by example. It also requires that managers provide a mechanism of positive reinforcement for behaviors that are consistent with the established culture and give members tools that identify how well they are performing in relations to the established direction (De Lisi, 2005). Survey groups suggest that they are (a) restructuring their organizations, (b) creating new visions with employee involvement, (c) improving communication, (d) leading by example, and (e) developing "departmental compasses" to change their cultures.

The literature speaks of cultural change methods in a formal and technical sense. As noted in the survey data, it is apparent that some of the survey respondents are utilizing many of these techniques to change their culture however they do not cite a particular practice or program. It furthermore appears that many of them were successful (see table 6 for additional information).

A limitation to this ARP is the lack of survey respondents. As noted in the procedures section, exhaustive efforts were made to attempt to increase the response rate however the total

response rate from two of the primary groups ranged from 19% to 20%. This is well below the rate required to ensure a 95% level of confidence. This information gathered may not be significant or valid, however the response rate may be indicative of the level of understanding regarding the topic of culture as it relates to the strategic planning process.

The researcher identified the WMAFC and LHRMA groups based on a perception that their memberships represent organizations that have an understanding of organizational culture and strategic planning. This may be true however it is clear from the survey responses that a significant understanding of culture, how to change it and the implementation of strategic planning processes may not exist in these populations.

As part of the survey process, the researcher met with Dr. Martin Hill and Ms. Laurie Van Ark from the Frost Center for Social Science Research at Hope College in Holland, MI. The purpose of our discussion was to discuss survey methodology and the results of surveys that were received. The researcher posed questions that attempted to identify reasons for low survey response and to identify if data received was valuable. It was suggested that low survey response may be a result of (a) poor understanding of culture and strategic planning by the respondents, (b) a lack of definitions for culture, and (c) the method for survey distribution (M. Hill, L. Van Ark, personal communication, April 2010). A poor understanding of culture by respondents is a significant finding and could suggest that potential respondents avoided the survey because they did not understand the subject. With regard to the survey distribution, Hill & Van Ark suggest that phone surveys have a much better response rate.

In summary it is apparent from the research that culture does play a role in the implementation of strategic planning processes and there are certain characteristics of cultures that impede the process. To be effective organizations can evaluate current cultures and identify

cultural roadblocks to change and strategic planning. To facilitate success, organizations can then take steps to implement methods or processes to change culture to meet the established goals of the organization which may include strategic planning.

Recommendations

Based on a review of the literature and data provided by the survey groups a number of recommendations are presented herein to assist in addressing the problem statement that has driven this research.

Recommendation 1

Develop a plan for preparing the Holland Fire Department for the implementation of a strategic planning process that includes evaluating the current culture and identifying the desired culture: As identified in the introduction section, the department has identified preparation for the implementation of a strategic planning process as a goal for fiscal year 2011. The information gathered in this ARP will provide a start completing this goal.

Recommendation 2

Provide formalized education to all Holland Fire Department members about strategic planning processes and organizational culture: Department management needs to acknowledge and recognize that culture not only plays a role in the implementation of strategic planning processes, it influences the every facet of the organization and can impact any change in the organization. This impact can be positive or negative. To gain this recognition it is important that management take steps to educate members of the organization about culture and how to identify what it is and how it influences the department. The literature and survey results validate that culture is a factor must be considered to be effective in making and leading change. Strategic planning is a method for constructing change.

Recommendation 3

Utilize a method or process to evaluate the current culture of the Holland Fire Department: As suggested by the research there is a number of ways to conduct this and they are based on quantitative and qualitative methods (Aiman-Smith, 2004). It will be important select a method that is tolerated by the current culture of the organization. Surveys and questionnaires may be viewed as just another survey and the process and the meaning may be lost. It is apparent that small group discussions where group members are allowed to discuss the components of their culture may be more meaningful and inclusive. Additional research and discussion will be required prior to selection. In addition, education for the management team on the process and method will be required.

Recommendation 4

Develop a strategy and process to change the culture in the Holland Fire Department, if needed so that it is more in alignment the strategic goals and objectives of the department: In addition to preparing for implementation of a strategic planning process, the Holland Fire Department is currently facing changes that will most likely be a challenge and threat to the current culture(s) that exist. These changes will be primarily external influences and will require a change in the culture and organization that is inconsistent with the current conditions. It will be necessary to identify appropriate methods and processes to change the culture to facilitate strategic change in the organization.

Recommendation 5

Facilitate and encourage education that develops a greater understanding of culture and the impact it has on fire service organizations in West Michigan: Survey results from fire service organizations in West Michigan indicate that there is a limited understanding of organizational

culture. Fire service organizations can grow and evolve through change if there is a greater understanding of culture and the impact has on the many facets of their organizations.

Recommendation 6

Provide additional research through alternative procedures: As noted, a limitation of the procedures is that the response rate to surveys submitted to the WMAFC and LHRMA was poor. To fully answer the research questions in this ARP more research is needed. It is suggested that alternative research procedures be utilized to identify what organizations that have engaged in strategic planning processes have done to evaluate and change culture to be successful. It is recommended by the researcher that small focus groups from organizations that have implemented a strategic planning process be studied and interviewed about the process, their cultures and problems and impediments to their process.

It is identified from the research contained in this ARP that there is a relationship between culture and strategic planning which can determine the success or failure of the implementation of such an effort. This research has presented some additional topics that are beyond the scope of this ARP, however they provide opportunities for others to expand the topic and research further. These topics include (a) identifying the level of cultural competence fire officers have in comparison to non-fire service managers, (b) determining if and what the fire service is doing to promote education and training to raise the level of cultural competence of fire officers so that they may be effective leaders of change, and (c) identify opportunities for fire service organizations to partner with colleges and universities to create legitimate courses of study that develop cultural competence and management skills for leading change in the fire service.

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Appendix A

Letter to Lakeshore Human Resource Management Association

February 6, 2010

Dear Lakeshore Human Resource Management Association Member:

The purpose of this correspondence is to request your assistance in completing a brief survey to facilitate the completion of an applied research project I am undertaking. This research project is part of the requirements needed to earn the designation of an Executive Fire Officer. This designation is granted by the United States Fire Administration's, National Fire Academy upon successful completion of the four year program. A focus of the program is to encourage student develop solutions to problems they have identified in their organizations through applied research projects.

With this in mind my current project is focusing on the preparation of public fire service organizations to begin the implementation of strategic planning processes. My research seeks answers to the following questions.

1. What role does organizational culture play in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

2. What, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the development of a strategic planning process?

3. What methods and practices are available for evaluating the organizational culture of fire service organizations?

4. What methods and practices do other organizations in West Michigan utilize for evaluating organizational culture?

5. What methods and practices are available to modify current organizational cultures that create an environment for the development of a strategic planning process?

The research will evaluate information that identifies what non-public fire service organizations are doing as well. Your assistance in completing the survey will fulfill this objective. To be valid, this survey must be a representative sample of the LHRMA membership, therefore a significant number of members must respond to the survey. Your time and effort will be truly appreciated. Please follow this hyperlink to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZXYGWYM

Upon completion of the survey results will be provided to your executive board and to others upon written request. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation. Should you have questions or concerns please contact me at 616-836-5408 or via email at: christophtinney@sbcglobal.net.

Respectfully,

Christopher M. Tinney,

Executive Fire Officer Candidate,
Holland Michigan

Appendix B

Letter to Western Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs

February 9, 2010

Dear Western Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs Member:

The purpose of this correspondence is to request your assistance in completing a brief survey to facilitate the completion of an applied research project I am undertaking. This research project is part of the requirements needed to earn the designation of an Executive Fire Officer. This designation is granted by the United States Fire Administration's, National Fire Academy upon successful completion of the four year program. A focus of the program is to encourage student develop solutions to problems they have identified in their organizations through applied research projects.

With this in mind my current project is focusing on the preparation of public fire service organizations to begin the implementation of strategic planning processes. My research seeks answers to the following questions.

1. What role does organizational culture play in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

2. What, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the development of a strategic planning process?

3. What methods and practices are available for evaluating the organizational culture of fire service organizations?

4. What methods and practices do other organizations in West Michigan utilize for evaluating organizational culture?

5. What methods and practices are available to modify current organizational cultures that create an environment for the development of a strategic planning process?

The research will evaluate how organizations address culture in preparation for strategic planning processes. Your assistance in completing the survey will fulfill this objective. To be valid, this survey must be a representative sample of the WMAFC membership, therefore a significant number of members must respond to the survey. Your time and effort will be truly appreciated. Please follow this hyperlink to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZNZQJZ2

Upon completion of the survey results will be provided to your executive board and to others upon written request. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation. Should you have questions or concerns please contact me at 616-836-5408 or via email at: christophtinney@sbcglobal.net.

Respectfully,

Christopher M. Tinney,

Interim Fire Chief
Executive Fire Officer Candidate, Holland Michigan

Appendix C

Survey Distributed to LHRMA, WMAFC & NFA Students

Preparing for the Implementation of a Strategic Planning Proce

1. What choice best identifies your organization?

○ Public Organization (Federal, State or Local Government)

○ Private Company or Business

○ Other

Other (please specify)

[   ]

2. Please identify the size of your organization.

○ Less than 25 employees

○ 26-50 employees

○ 51-75 employees

○ 76-100 employees

○ 101-125 employees

○ 126-150 employees

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

3. Has your organization implemented a strategic planning process?

○ Yes   ○ No

4. Did your organization prepare employees for the implementation of a strategic planning process?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Not applicable (your organization has not implemented a strategic planning process)

If you answered yes, please explain what was done to prepare employees.

[   ]

Preparing for the Implementation of a Strategic Planning Process

5. In preparation for the implementation of the strategic planning process was the orgainzational culture of your organization evaluated?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Not applicable (your organization has not implemented a strategic planning process)

If you answered yes, what tool, instrument or method was used?

[   ]

6. Do you believe that organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Please explain your answer.

[   ]

7. Are you aware of Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

8. Have you utilized the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)in your organization?

◯ Yes

◯ No

9. Based on your experience or opinion; what, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of a strategic planning process? Please explain.

[   ]

Preparing for the Implementation of a Strategic Planning Process

10. Has your organization implemented steps or processes to change the culture of the organization?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If you answered yes, briefly explain the purpose and steps taken to necessitate the change.

11. If you anwered yes, to question 10 and implemented methods or steps to change the culture of your organization, were you successful in making the desired change?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Not applicable (My organization has not taken steps to change the culture of our organization.)

Your comments regarding your success or lack of success are welcome. Please add them if you desire.

Appendix D

Questionnaire to Bryson, Cameron and Harrison

Dear Dr. Harrison:

My name is Chris Tinney; I am a Fire Chief in Holland, MI and Executive Fire Officer Candidate at the United States Fire Administration's, National Fire Academy. As part of this 4 year program we are required to complete applied research projects in each year of the program. As part of my current project I am researching tools, methods and practices for assessing our fire department's organizational culture, so that we may determine our readiness to embrace a strategic planning process. As part of my literature review I have spent some time reading your publication, Diagnosing Organizational Culture. To further my understanding of the relationship between organizational culture and strategic planning processes I am attempting to answer the questions noted below. Your willingness to provide your thoughts on these questions will assist me in my research process and will be appreciated.

1.   What role does organizational culture play in the implementation of a strategic planning   process? To what degree should it be considered?

2.   What, if any, characteristics of an organizations culture impede the development of a strategic planning process?

3.   What methods and practices do other organizations (non-fire department) utilize to assess organizational culture?

4.   What methods and practices are available to modify current organizational cultures that create an environment for the successful development of a strategic planning process?

As noted above, this is an applied research project that is applicable to our fire department. This project began as a study of the implementation of a strategic planning process for the department (economic uncertainty and a large turnover in the last 3 years has made this a must) however it is my belief that it is important to begin studying methods and practices to assess the readiness of the department to embark on this journey. Some believe that Fire Service culture is unique and can be challenging when one attempts implement change. Regardless of the belief system getting a handle on it and understanding the culture of our fire department will be imperative to preparing for the implementation of a strategic planning process.

Thank you in advance for your time and anticipated cooperation.

Respectfully,
Chris Tinney

Holland, MI 49423

Tx. (616) 395-9992
Cell. (616) 836-5408
Alternate Email: ctinney@sprint.blackberry.net

Appendix E

Survey Data from National Fire Academy, Executive Development Group

1. What choice best identifies your organization?

Public   22

Private   0

Other   0

2. Please identify the size of your organization by the number of employees.

Less than 25   0   00.0%

25-50   5   22.7%

51-75   7   31.8%

76-100   2   9.1%

101-125   1   4.5%

126-150   2   9.1%

Other   5   22.7%

3. Has your organization implemented a strategic planning process?

Yes   77.3%

No   22.7%

4. Did your organization prepare employees for the implementation of a strategic planning

process?

Yes   11   50.0%

No   9   40.9%

Not applicable   2   9.1%

5. In preparation for the implementation of the strategic planning process was the organizational culture of your organization evaluated?

Yes   11   50.0%

No   7   31.8%

Not applicable   4   18.2%

6. Do you believe that organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

Yes   21   95.5%

No   1   4.5%

7. Are you aware of Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)?

Yes   5   22.7%

No   17   77.3%

8. Have you utilized the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) in your organization?

Yes   2   9.1%

No   20   90.9%

9. Based on your experience or opinion; what, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of a strategic planning process? Please explain.

Appendix H contains the written responses to this question.

10. Has your organization implemented steps or processes to change the culture of the organization?

Yes   8   36.4%

No   14   63.6%

11. If you answered yes, to question 10 and implemented methods or steps to change the culture

of your organization, where you successful in making the desired change?

Yes	6	27.3%
No	2	9.1%
Not applicable	14	63.6%

Appendix F

Survey Data from the WMAFC

1. What choice best identifies your organization?

Public	29	96.7%
Private	1	3.3%
Other	0	00.0%

2. Please identify the size of your organization by the number of employees.

Less than 25	9	30.0%
25-50	15	50.0%
51-75	3	10.0%
76-100	0	00.0%
101-125	0	00.0%
126-150	1	3.3%
Other	2	6.7%

3. Has your organization implemented a strategic planning process?

Yes	11	36.7%
No	19	63.3%

4. Did your organization prepare employees for the implementation of a strategic planning process?

Yes	6	20.0%
No	10	33.3%
Not applicable	14	46.7%

5. In preparation for the implementation of the strategic planning process was the organizational culture of your organization evaluated?

Yes	6	20.0%
No	7	23.3%
Not applicable	17	56.7%

6. Do you believe that organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

Yes	26	86.7%
No	4	13.3%

7. Are you aware of Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)?

Yes	2	6.7%
No	28	93.3%

8. Have you utilized the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) in your organization?

Yes	0	000.0%
No	30	100.0%

9. Based on your experience or opinion; what, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of a strategic planning process? Please explain.

Appendix I contains the written responses to this question.

10. Has your organization implemented steps or processes to change the culture of the organization?

Yes	12	40.0%
No	18	60.0%

11. If you answered yes, to question 10 and implemented methods or steps to change the culture

of your organization, where you successful in making the desired change?

Yes	10	33.3%
No	3	10.0%
Not applicable	17	56.7%

Appendix G

Survey Data from the LHRMA

1. What choice best identifies your organization?

Public	7	33.3%
Private	13	61.9%
Other	1	4.8%

2. Please identify the size of your organization by the number of employees.

Less than 25	0	00.0%
25-50	7	33.3%
51-75	2	9.5%
76-100	2	9.5%
101-125	2	9.5%
126-150	3	14.3%
Other	5	23.8%

3. Has your organization implemented a strategic planning process?

Yes	10	47.6%
No	11	52.4%

4. Did your organization prepare employees for the implementation of a strategic planning

process?

Yes	8	38.1%
No	3	14.3%
Not applicable	10	47.6%

5. In preparation for the implementation of the strategic planning process was the organizational culture of your organization evaluated?

Yes   5   23.8%

No   7   33.3%

Not applicable   9   42.9%

6. Do you believe that organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

Yes   19   90.5%

No   2   9.5%

7. Are you aware of Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)?

Yes   2   9.5%

No   19   90.5%

8. Have you utilized the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) in your organization?

Yes   0   000.0%

No   21   100.0%

9. Based on your experience or opinion; what, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of a strategic planning process? Please explain.

Appendix J contains the written responses to this question.

10. Has your organization implemented steps or processes to change the culture of the organization?

Yes   13   61.9%

No   8   38.1%

11. If you answered yes, to question 10 and implemented methods or steps to change the culture

of your organization, where you successful in making the desired change?

Yes	9	42.9%
No	0	00.0%
Not applicable	12	57.1%

Appendix H

Comments from National Fire Academy, Executive Development Group Survey

4. Did your organization prepare employees for the implementation of a strategic planning process?

- Orientation meeting to explain reason for the committee and what to expect out of it.

- Involving all members an opportunity to participate in the plan. Also completed surverys (*sic*) and communicated through several mediums

- Meetings were held with all sections and divisions to determine long range planning needs

- My answer is no it was doen (*sic*) at the Council level with no imput (*sic*) form staff or employees

- Risk Reduction Officer distributed outlines and rough drafts to chiefs and company officers for proofreading and review and built the final document from their input.

- Each year the State Fire Marshal's Office strategic (*sic*) plan is updated. Staff are (*sic*) invited to attend the development meetings. Once implemented all managers and supervisors are responsible to ensure all their staff understand the goals and components of teh (*sic*) plan and how everyone contributes to the achievement of them.

- Scheduled meetings with each of the crews allowing feedback.

- Staff was advised of the need and intention to transition from a capital purchasing plan to a strategic process that covers all needs (including processes (*sic*) and concepts), both immediate and future, and also solicits input from the external stakeholders of the organization.

- We have a strategic plan in pace since 2000. Tehy (*sic*) are done in 5 year increments. This year we are doing our third and everyone down to the volunteer is envolved (*sic*)

5. In preparation for the implementation of the strategic planning process was the organizational culture of your organization evaluated?

- New mission and value statements created

- Surveys

- Past practice and taking ideas for change

- Surveys, team meetings and department meetings.

- Focus group discussions and surveys of the entire organization

- Survey

- Brainstorming and info gathering from personnel

6. Do you believe that organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

- Culture is the warp and woof of the line firefighters. Administrtors (*sic*) may not want to admit it, but it is a very influential factor in the way an organization sees itself and attaches value to the organization.

- The culture of our organization has changed with the additions of new technology and new services provided so it was critical to take a new fresh look at our strategic planning.

- Buy-in from all stakeholders must be obtained and communicated to ensure a shift of the organizational culture.

- If the culture of change is not in place, then strategic planning is almost impossible. Culture dictates how any society, organization, civilization succeeds or, more often fails. All one has to do is look at history. Civilizations, societies, and organizations that do not

change are destined to fail. Chris, I bet you will have a hard time figuring out who is
answering this one!!! Signed, the culture crazy man from Kansas!! Ryan

- The department has a strong labor management culture. To develop any kind of long
  range initiative all levels need to participate in the plan. The inclusion of both labor and
  management has proven to increase buy-in and organize the system to move toward a
  common goal.

- The culture of the organization plays a key factor in implementing your strategic plan.
  The way your orhanization (*sic*) behaves and functions will definitely effect the way the
  plan is implemented and to say nothing of some times you need a culture change to make
  the plan work as your organization may be fighting the change just because of the way it
  operates and functions.

- The plan will only be as successful as the participants make it. If there is to be a plan for
  change, the organization will need to embrace it.

- Staff have (*sic*) complained in the past that they have not been involved with the strategic
  planning process. It was identified that there was not a high level of "buy-in" to the
  organizations goals as staff either didn't see value or didn't see how they fit into the plan.
  It is the day-to-day behaviors of personel the contribute (*sic*) to the ultimate achievement
  of the plan/goals. If the culture of any organization conflicts with the goals they will fail
  to achieve them.

- We have to recognize what our culture looks like in its entirety in order to be able to
  effectively navigate the organization to have the goals realized.

- One aspect of our strategic plan includes diversifying the fire department.

9. Based on your experience or opinion; what, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of a strategic planning process? Please explain.

- Education level of the members

  Employee satisfaction relative to pay issues, equipment issues, staffing issues

  Tradition

  Leadership, both formal and informal

- Genertaion (*sic*) gaps are the biggest roadblock to changing anything in organizational cultures and ours is no different. We are beginning to see an influx of new guys that are young and have different ideas than the older generation firefighters.

- The willingness for the entire organization to realize they are stakeholders in the strategic planning process.

- The lack of communication and buy-in from stakeholders, failure of pervious plans, no inclusion of stakeholders.

- The unwillingness to change. This can be seen in very small things (changing hose vendors, etc..). This transcends to other areas of the organization and eventually all members stop trying, causing organization dysfunction. Additionally, I hear all too often that "just have wait until certain people retire". This is the worst approach possible because organizational dysfunction and unwillingness to change is a learned "skill". Coming up under people that are not forward thinkers will stunt an organization and thus begins the vicious cycle. I could write a book here!!

- Any kind of bias weather it is culture or management driven hinders change.

- The culture in itself that this is the way we have always done it and there is no reason to change.

- Lack of communication.

- None

- If the culture of any organization conflicts with the goals they will fail to achieve them.

- Tradition. Accepted culture.

- Really not sure

- It is a great process if you can get it implemented

- Any barriers to effective communications be it union related, culture or tradition.

- Lack of interest from the online personnel to change.

- Lack of knowledge of the process and difficulty in convincing that there is a buy-in from all levels.

- In my experience our existing culture doesn't (*sic*) like the idea of change. Strategic planning is planning to make changes for future success. Not all within our organization will see what you see as good change.

- taking (*sic*) care of our own first, develop our people, never compromise safety etc.

- resistance to change

- I believe that you need buy in from labor, management meet with union executive board and advised them of the specific portion of the strategic plan that may have the most impact on labor. Was (*sic*) well received.

- Buy in from the bottom up

- Lack of trust and fear of the leadership will impede the process. The troops will always wonder what the underlying reason is for developing and implementing a plan.

10. Has your organization implemented steps or processes to change the culture of the organization?

- We have recreated our mission and value statements and it has been at the forefront of our planning from the top level to the bottom and we have seen a fairly significant change to our organizational culture from all the (*sic*) acceptance at all levels.

- Recruitment.

- Following CFAI accredidation, (*sic*) our department has made efforts to make accredidation (*sic*) more than just a patch on a sleeve of a decal on the truck. We have tried to get accredidation (*sic*) documents in front of all levels of the department so that they know the importance of using it as a change agent. Seeing something this often will hopefully ensure that those within the organization grow to understand the importance of change in our organization. This is certainly (*sic*) a culture change for us.

- We (*sic*) have encouraged the career firefighters to have more input into the organizational change. We created a (*sic*) officer mentoring program.

- Introduced core values in 2000; all members took an oathe (*sic*) and were sworn in. Before that time there were no sworn members. Another major component of cultural change was the development and implementation of a qualifications system for all members.

11. If you answered yes, to question 10 implemented methods or steps to change the culture of your organization, were you successful in making the desired change?

- We have made great advancements in changing our organizational culture, but we still have a long way to go. Old habits die hard and some even harder. With the use of new

GO's we are taking charge of our actions and making ourselves accountable if we vary from them.

- We have not compiled enough data yet.

- We have completed the planning process but the pan (*sic*) was recieved (*sic*) and filed by the city council but never implemented

- To a small degree. This is a recent (less than three years) attempt for us so its (*sic*) still a work in progress.

- The organization has to be willing to lose people and the leadership needs to be willing to stand firm for what is right.

Appendix I

Written Comments from the WMAFC Group Survey

4. Did your organization prepare employees for the implementation of a strategic planning process?

- Initial employee survey covering wants and needs, included individuals from several areas of department to planning process, and given employees constant communication on strategic planning process.

- Employees were advised that long range planning is a goal for 2010. Employees were asked to consider what they would like to see, where we have been, where we should be. Staff officers were requested to forecast calls, high call volume areas, evaluate resource needs to mitigate calls in the future. Staffing concerns, change in the type of population and density.

- Employees have been advised and the adminstrative (*sic*) board and chief officers participating in the plan development under the direction of the administrative chief.

- The intial (*sic*) process was done by my predecessor, information was sent out to all that were involved. They were then brought together for a series of meetings. I have since reviewed this and have worked through my Fire Board and various Department heads.

5. In preparation for the implementation of the strategic planning process was the organizational culture of your organization evaluated?

- in the initial survey

- Transitioning from paid on-call to combination

- Platform is the CFAI's accreditation program

- The method used was to identify the various cultural factions that exist within LFD and try to better understand them.

6. Do you believe that organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

- The organizational culture of the fire service is steeped with tradition, and for the most part, to resist change. The strategic planning process, as I understand it, is like baby steps of change and implementation over several years. Even baby steps in the fire service is like pulling teeth unless the change is at least partially "created", or in some way supported by the entire organization. You must include each member in the process from the idea of creating a plan to implementation of the plan. The "role" you are speaking about will either support the plan to make it successful, or kill it.

- It is important to consider our organizational culture whe discussing future planning because they will need to partner with us in supporting any change. We all know how difficult any change can be so it would be appropriate to communicate the reasons why were heading in the direction were heading.

- Yes, because of the impact and influences that the culture exerts on the orgainization. (*sic*)

- Structure, discipline, training and enforcement of rules and policy are major pieces of successful planning.

- Culture defines how much change can be handled by the organization. Culture also give the planning group an idea how willing individuals are to aid in the process and change with the process.

- The culture will have or in my case will not have a sense of value for what we can bring to the table. Educating the member of the board is the first challenge to having the ability to influence and have any kind of control that makes strategic planning valuable.

- Somewhat. The rate of pay for full-time firefighters by the Township does not satisfy the community need. Cost of housing etc.

- Employees must have an understanding of the process and more importantly (*sic*) be willing to accept it.

- The "culture" has the power to define the organization. A strong culture can sometimes be in the driver's seat, and strongly influence the direction taken. Especially when there is a perceived or real threat of change.

- Culture will affect change and it is essential to ensure the culture is prepared for and participating in the change as well as understanding its value to the agency and service delivery.

- today organizational culture is a "I want it now", this plays into our life such a health care, fast food, purchasing of vehicles, we want to get it now, that is why we do not want to order it or make an appointment, this prevents us from looking toward the future because our thoughts are stuck in today or this week.
  Our department has done a capital outlay plan for the next 20 years, this is easier to produce because it is a tangible list. when you deal with tangible items, they can be envisioned,

- Education throughout the department membership is always beneficial.

- Different ideas form different cultural background.

- I believe the culture runs much deeper than just the organization. The fire service as a whole has been trained to "react and overcome" situations that present in front of us. The February 15, 2010 issue of "On Scene" published by the I.A.F.C. discusses this very topic.

- In order to complete the process you need to get input and buy in from the organization. The biggest problem to the process may to getting that buy in as it may involve changes that are not readily accepted by the group.

- Certainly, you have to undestand (*sic*) the various players and roles that exist within your department to know the impact that they have.

- Strategic planning can only be successful if it is ambraced (*sic*) and driven from the top down.

- It starts at the very top of organization (Council, Boards, Governing bodies)

- Certain individuals have there own agendas that they want to push forward.

- I believe that the one of the most important steps to sucessful (*sic*) strategic planning is to address the organizational culture. If as an organization, you have not adequatelly (*sic*) maintained the culture, you stand to suffer from complacency, laziness and an attitude that any problem is the result of someone (*sic*) else and not me. Without organization ownership and accountability, I don't think that successful strategic planning can exist.

9. Based on your experience or opinion; what, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of a strategic planning process? Please explain.

- Not wanting to make changes

- n/a

- Close minded attitudes

- Without total support of your members it will die (See question 6)

- Fear of the unknown. Conspiracy theorists negative spin.

- The fear of change.

- None

- N/A

- ?

- unwillingness (*sic*) to change or aid.

- Our department is not ruled by personal gain. In our jobs we see life and death and understand the value of a greater good. "Many" of our political leaders have their own personal agendas and helping them to see "what's in it for them" can be challenging.

- The make of the department and the tradition or history is a tough thing to break, especially if the organization has many senior people.

- Trust and apathy. Either one can lead to employees simply going through the motions with no commitment or belief that the planning process means anything.

- Morale. Level of progressiveness.

- People not will to change

- Tradition and lack of experinces (*sic*) outside of the member agency.

- we are a lazy society, what has worked in the past will do for now, change is a difficult thing to implement , why plan to do it. That is what I see in today's workers

- Does not impede.

- Stuborn (*sic*), Attitudes ...this is the way it has always been, no need to change

- As outlined above this has not been a characterisitc (*sic*) of the fire service. Little effort has been afforded to this topic although it is beginning to build momentum. Attention

thorugh (*sic*) training needs to take place, beginning at the top of the organization and work through the ranks. We offer a multitude of two, three day courses for strategy and tactics on the incident scene but very few on the administrative/strtegic (*sic*) department planning front.

- Unknown

- I believe the biggest characteristic is that of the fire service not always willing to change what thier "norm" is or should be.

- The Union has to be involved and buy in, also most people do not like change and have mistrust of something new, or different.

- Persons not feeling things will change.

- AGAIN, SUPPORT FROM THE TOP DOWN IS A MUST

- Education of organizations leaders

- Again agendas of a few influence the many.

- The lack of holding people accountable and the failure to utilize progressive discipline to modify behaviors.

- Strong misguilded (*sic*) leadership

  Inability to change or explore new ideas

10. Has your organization implemented steps or processes to change the culture of the organization?

- In today's economy every department in some way has been forced to implement change at some level. We all have to do more with less. We have reduced our staffing level from 11 to 9 career positions and from 3 to 2 person minimum staffing. We are still conducting as many site plans and public education events, but with fewer people. We are looking at

eliminating priority 3 calls and other cost savings measures. We are being more creative with our budgeted funds. Our "culture" once told me that if I went over budget I could ask for a budget amendment (s*ic*) at the end of the year. Now my culture says if I go over budget I better have a good explanation, find it somewhere else in my budget or find another job. This may not be exactly what you are calling cultural change, but it is one facet.

- Consolidation and joint partnerships with area departments for services. Steps taken included meetings with formal and informal leaders of the organization. Committee groups.

- We continue to try and implement many safety iniatives. (*sic*)

- a. Members understand organizational goals.

  b. Members respect culture.

  c. Members maintain a non-hostile work environment, both for co-workers, external contacts and citizens

- Created a department visions and mission statement. Created department goals and objectives to aim for the vision.

- Only at monthly department meetings in an attempt to educate and teach a different point of view in an attempt to do things differently as a result of seeing things differently. Very slow process....takes years.

- Changing organizational culture is an ongoing effort. it is done through a constant demonstration of doing the right thing and empowering your personnel to do so also. Specific steps have not been taken.

- Development of a department compass. Focus on "Guiding our Future by Respecting the Past". The TRFD was established is 1855. Home of the "Wide Awake Hose Company" and the "Optimates". (*sic*) Those titles defined the culture back then. We need some of that back today.

- The ISO Process. I believe it give us benchmarks to shoot for. The process hurt at first but once we got into our heads that the changes were good, we have become better for the results

- Explainations (*sic*) of various program options and values one on one and in group sessions.

- The first step we have taken is to enusre (*sic*) data collection is complete and accurate, without good data strategic planning is difficult. This has been a two year process as we work with our officers to write complete and accurate incident reports.
  We have also established an equipment replacement schedule, which until two years ago never existed.

- We have tried to better our communications with all and to try and work closer in a more collabrative (*sic*) manner with the Union.

- I have been most successful by starting in small steps. I have empowered individuals to take on specific projects. Through this process they are allowed to have decision making authority, accountability and responsibility. As they complete the projects, I monitor their activity, help them reorganize if they stumble and reward them for projects that are completed within time and dollar constraints. The reward can be as simple as recognizing their acheivement (*sic*) with their peers.

11. If you answered yes, to question 10 and implemented methods of steps to change the culture of your organization, were you successful in making the desired change?

- Somewhat successful, we continue to try.

- I would like to check yes and no in this one. We have learned a lot in how the culture needs to be included in every area. In some essential changes the culture defeated the change rendering the process a failure. There have been areas where change was welcomed, however, due to the culture.

- Greed and personal agrenda's (*sic*) are very powerful characteristics to overcome.

- Work in progress.

- Not yet. It is a work in progress.

- We are in process and will continue in process for quite a while.

- Our department has done priority setting goals and objectives over the past 10 years, most goals were implemented within 1-2 years. we upgraded to paramedic level after staff did an extensive study. lowering our ISO rating, consolidation of remote fire stations, these items was strategic planning, but short time planning of only 1-2 years

- We have come along ways in our quest to compile complete and accuarate (*sic*) data, but still need to continue improving in this area. The data now collected will help "paint the picture" so we can look at strategic planning.

- Somewhat successful, it is on-going process trying to build trust.

- Once the personnel see that you will provide the leadership that is needed to implement change, such as empowerment, accountability, discipline and reward, most individuals will choose to follow the lead. It almost becomes contagious and you will see an increase in productivity, efficiency and overall positive actions throughout the organization. This

also lends itself to productive "peer pressure" towards individuals that want to stay the

same and resist the changes. They are forced to either jump on board or seek alternative

employment.

Appendix J

Written Comments from the LHRMA Group Survey

1. What choice best identifies your organization?

- Non-profit

4. Did your organization prepare employees for the implementation of a strategic planning

process?

- We know that the owner's son will at one point take over.

- Planning process is part of who we are. It is well known to staff.

- In the process of working on one.

- Leaders were involved in agenda preparation and each had roles to present during the

  process.

- A department meeting - formation of committees - attendance at committee meetings to

  assist in direction

- Group meetings with impacted employees, held by the General Manager.

- Our CEO holds focus groups related to our Strategic Plan to get feedback and input on

  how best to execute the plan.

- We conduct Empire Operations Council (EOC) meetings to discuss what is being

  planned; we reinforce the culture, the strategic planning process, and how we plan to

  execute.

5. In preparation for the implementation of the strategic planning process was the organizational

culture of your organization evaluated?

- Informal-involving many in operations-discussion

- Comparison with other types of orginizations (*sic*) - historical perspective

- Focus groups conducted by outside consultant.

- We strive to reduce bureaucracy, as an example.

6. Do you believe that organizational culture plays a role in the implementation of a strategic planning process?

- We need to take into consideration all the different types of people in our organization.

- It is important to know where you want to go with your company in order to prepare a plan on how to get there.

- It is the culture driven from the top down that drives the direction of the planning process.

- Buy in.

- No answer provided

- The culture of an orginization (*sic*) will determine how it accepts change and what change may be necessary

- It is my opinion that you need buy in from all levels within the organization to truly implement a sucessful (*sic*) strategic plan. This starts with educating your personnel on the process and the fact that they are a shareholder due to their employment with the organiztion. (*sic*) Once they have had an opportunity to "wrap their head" around this concept, I think it will help them and the organization by enhancing their positive energy towards strategic planning and the benefits it provides.

- A team-based culture would result in employee expectations of broad inclusion in the process. A heirarchical (*sic*) culture would result in employee expectations of a more top-down approach to strategic planning: the President or General Manager would be

expected to define the corporate goals and metrics, and then assign action plans to various departments.

- Yes - if employees have a vested interest in the organization they are more likely to be supportive of the strategic planning process. Typically when there is a positive organizational culture employees are more vested in what is going within the company.

- The culture is largely credited with our ability to achieve a great many positive organizational outcomes. Not the least of which is having a strategic organizational process. We focus on organizational goals, and the "Eight Guiding Principles" of our organization.

9. Based on your experience or opinion; what, if any, characteristics of organizational culture impede the implementation of a strategic planning process? Please explain.

- No Answer

- Experience level of the membership. Leader's ability to explain and manage the process. Trust of leader by the members.

- None

- No answer provided.

- Lack of involvement of lower level staff.

- If negative attitudes exist as the culture; no one will be open to any change.

- No answer given

- No answer given

- Openness to change, collaboration-rallying around one vision.

- No answer

- No comments provided.

- There is sometimes a fear of change along with an attitude "we've always done it this way" or "we tried that before and it didn't work"

- Time - How long has the orginization (*sic*) had this cultural attitude

  Senority (*sic*) - How many of the members have significant ownership in the current culture

  Safety - How will the change effect the psychological or physical safety of the members

  Trust - does the organization (*sic*) trust the entity responsible for the change

- First is the failure of understanding the process. Because it may be new or consist of a "change in culture", at first blush it is often perceived (*sic*) as a negative. "We never have done anything like this before and have gotten along fine, why do we need to start this type process now"? In order for strategic planning to be successful, you must be able to explain and show "value added" results to your personnel.

- An organization whose employees have gone through continual, unplanned change (such as frequent shifts in focus or direction, or massive downsizing due to econmic (*sic*) realities) will have difficulty convincing employees of the value of purposeful strategic action. Also, organizations which have a culture of entitlement may find it difficult to motivate employees to embrace strategic action and the change required by a strategic plan.

- Lack of employee buy-in, lack of training in the process and what it means in the long run

- Employees who feel under-valued or who do not feel empowered to do things within their organization.

- its always been this way, not here, no follow thru, top down, 'boss favorite' leads process and its seen as their agenda, not objective

- na

- If anything, the leadership tends to be very forgiving and benevolent. One could argue that an overemphasis of soft skills may impete (*sic*) implementation.

- People with bad attitudes and the negativity related to prior actions by the company tend to linger and drive discontent in the organization. It is hard for people to let go of the past even when you're trying to do something good.

10. Has your organization implemented steps or proceses to change the culture of the organization?

- Additional training in many area. (*sic*) Trying to educate employees to ensure that they are in tune with our organization and balanced in their lives.

- Changed managers thus a change from micro management to one of member empowerment

- Restructure

- We have not implemented a process to change the culture but we are reviewing our culture to see if we need to change it to be successful in the changing economic time.

- Vision - employee engagement.

- No answer

- Are in the process of implementing a "Best Player Plays" strategy. Helping to coach employees on what constitutes a best player and how that will impact their career, their performance, and the strength & health of the company

- To more efficiently (*sic*) utilize resources and provide a safer and more complete service - Didn't call it change - refered (*sic*) to it as small differences in operation - made most of the changes gradually - if a change didn't work acknowledged that and startewd (*sic*) over.

- Through basic organziational (*sic*) aspects of holding people accountable, delegating responsibility (*sic*) and making sure this delagated responsiblity (*sic*) is followed through. By empowering your personnel at all levels to be part of the process in making routine decisions. Most of this involves administrative activities and should not be confused with operational/emergency scene roles. In my experience, the confusion of someone "giving up authority" on a scene scares them and they resist the change.

- Revised employee handbook. Revised compensation system. Increased leadership development opportunities. Implemented front-line supervisory training.

- We are in the beginning stages of defining what we would like to see

- Follow up, circle back, be informative, be open to communications, seek all level participation

- The company's success was built on our favorable culture. Employees thrive in this culture and people like it. Leadership would not support a change because of the demonstrated results of the culture.

- Somewhat. We've done surveys, however we have found that people like to complain, but then don't want to be involved in making it better. We've tried to get employees involved in acting upon survey results, but no one wants to get involved.

11. If you answered yes, to question 10 and implemented methods or steps to change the culture of your organization, were you successful in making the desired change?

- It is still continuous.

- Slowly, but change in culture is taking place.

- But...at a cost. Long term affects are yet to be determined.

- Still in the process-too early to evaluate.

- Just in the implementation phase

- 1. Empowering personnel and holding them accountable.

  2. Progressive discipline measures that are (*sic*) consistent throughout the organization.

  3. Good communication at all levels. Making sure the communication is two-way.

  4. Taking ownership and responsibility (*sic*) for the good and the bad regarding any issue.

  5. Supporting your personnel and not undermining them.

- The "desired change" is a work in process. Our strategic planning process is still not "embedded" into our organization to the extent that we want. The process generally runs three to six months behind the intended schedule. Corporate metrics are still being reported late, and some departments continue to focus upon their own projects to the exclusion of organization-wide goals. However, after 18 months, we are seeing a serious commitment to the strategic planning process on the part of top management. With improved communication efforts, we are hopeful that this commitment will extend to middle management, supervision, and our front line employees.

- You must make a difference and some times it takes time, start and keep at it. Communicate with staff at all levels, implement changes and keep implementing changes that can be sustained or replaced with other appropriate changes, don't slide back

Appendix K

Email Response from John Bryson

Dear Mr. Tinney,
Thank you for your email and I apologize for my slow response. I am on sabbatical leave this year in London writing the fourth edition of my strategic planning book and trying hard to focus on just that. I've included some brief comments IN CAPS within the text of your message below:

Chris Tinney wrote:
> Dear Professor Bryson:
>
> My name is Chris Tinney; I am a Fire Chief in Holland, MI and
> Executive Fire Officer Candidate at the United States Fire
> Administration's, National Fire Academy. As part of this 4 year
> program we are required to complete applied research projects in each
> year of the program. As part of my current project I am researching
> tools, methods and practices for assessing our fire department's
> organizational culture to determine our readiness to embrace a
> strategic planning process. As part of my literature review I have
> spent some time reading your publication, Strategic Planning for
> Public and Nonprofit Organizations. In chapter 3 it is acknowledged
> that strategic planning will evolve out of organizational culture and
> even community culture. It is also noted that appreciations of
> organizational culture should be part of the initial agreement to
> begin a strategic planning process. To further my understanding of
> the relationship between organizational culture and strategic planning
> processes I attempting to answer the questions noted below. Your
> willingness to provide your thoughts on these questions will assist me in my research process and will be appreciated.
>
>
>
> 1.   What role does organizational culture play in the implementation of
> a strategic planning process? To what degree should it be considered?
>
> CULTURE HAS A MAJOR IMPACT ON WHAT PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO "HEAR" AND DO. EVERY SUCCESSFUL SIGNIFICANT STRATEGY CHANGE ALSO INVOLVES A CHANGE IN CULTURE. THAT IS ONE REASON WHY SUCH CHANGES TAKE TIME. SEE ETIENNE WENGER, COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1998, FOR SOME DETAIL ABOUT WHAT IS INVOLVED.
>
> 2.   What, if any, characteristics of an organizations culture impede
> the development of a strategic planning process?
>
> CULTURES NEED TO BE REASONABLY OPEN TO INFORMATION FROM WITHIN, FROM ELSEWHERE, AND TO LEARNING.
>
> 3.   What methods and practices do other organizations (non-fire
> department) utilize to assess organizational culture?
>
> SURVEYS CAN HELP. BUT YOU CAN ALSO JUST ASK GROUPS OF PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT OUR CULTURE, WHAT'S NOT, AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGE. USE A FACILITATED PROCESS AND FLIPCHARTS, OR DO AFFINITY DIAGRAMS.
>
> 4.   What methods and practices are available to modify current

> organizational cultures that create an environment for the successful
> development of a strategic planning process?
>
> A STARTING POINT IS EDGAR SCHEIN'S CLASSIC BOOK CALLED ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
AND LEADERSHIP. ALSO, PEOPLE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THEIR CULTURE; SEE RESPONSE ABOVE.
IT ALSO HELPS FOR PEOPLE TO GO SEE TRULY SUPERB COUNTERPART ORGANIZATIONS AND TO
TALK WITH PEOPLE THERE ABOUT THEIR CULTURE. THEN COME BACK AND TALK ABOUT WHAT
THEY'D LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT THEIR OWN CULTURE. LEADERSHIP, BROADLY CONCEIVED, IS
CRUCIAL.
>
> As noted above, this is an applied research project that is applicable
> to our fire department. This project began as a study of the
> implementation of a strategic planning process for the department
> (economic uncertainty and a large turnover in the last 3 years has
> made this a must) however it is my belief that it is important to
> begin studying methods and practices to assess the readiness of the
> department to embark on this journey. Fire Service culture is unique
> and can be challenging when one attempts implement change. Getting a
> handle on it and understanding the culture of our fire department will
> be imperative to preparing for the implementation of a strategic planning process.
>
>
I UNDERSTAND THE THINKING THAT FIRE DEPARTMENT CULTURE IS UNIQUE, BUT I ALSO THINK
A STATEMENT LIKE THAT IS WAY TOO EASILY OVERDONE AND TOO BROADLY BELIEVED
(HAVING HEARD SIMILAR STATEMENTS ABOUT ALMOST EVERY ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE).
TOO OFTEN IT'S JUST AN EXCUSE TO AVOID LOOKING AT HOW THINGS CAN BE DONE BETTER --
AND PEOPLE NEED TO HEAR THAT!! GO LOOK AT DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE TRULY SUPERB AND
THEN ASK WHAT DO THEY DO THAT WE ALREADY DO, AND AT WHAT DO THEY DO THAT WE
DON'T AND SHOULD BE DOING. HOW CAN FIRE CULTURE BE "UNIQUE" IF SOME FIRE
DEPARTMENTS ARE SUPERB AND OTHERS AREN'T? MY GUESS IS THAT THE CULTURES OF GREAT
FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE GREAT, AND THE CULTURES OF BAD FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE PRETTY
APPALLING.

SEE ALSO THE LATEST EDITION OF BOLMAN AND DEAL'S REFRAMING ORGANIZATIONS.

I HOPE THESE COMMENTS ARE HELPFUL! ALL THE BEST, JOHN
>
> Thank you in advance for your time and anticipated cooperation.
>
> Respectfully,
>>
> Chris Tinney
> Tx. (616) 395-9992
> Cell. (616) 836-5408
> Alternate Email: cmtinney@sprint.blackberry.net

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On sabbatical leave 15 August 2009 – 14 August 2010.

Appendix L

Email Response from Kim Cameron

Thanks very much for your note, Chris. It sounds as if you are engaged in a very interesting and high impact program. I am not certain that I can provide specific answers to your questions below, because strategic planning has so many varied forms. It is not always clear what assumptions are being made or what framework is being applied when organizations engage in "strategic planning." Nevertheless, I have provided some very brief responses to your questions below. I have also attached an article describing a culture change process. This may or may not be helpful to you as you pursue your project.

Best wishes.

Kim

Kim Cameron
William Russell Kelly Professor of
Management and Organizations
Ross School of Business
and
Professor of Higher Education
School of Education
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From: Chris Tinney [christophtinney@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, March 01, 2010 11:27 PM
To: kim_cameron@umich.edu
Subject: Questions regarding organizational culture as it relates to strategic planning processes.

Dear Professor Cameron:

My name is Chris Tinney; I am a Fire Chief in Holland, MI and Executive Fire Officer Candidate at the United States Fire Administration's, National Fire Academy. As part of this 4 year program we are required to complete applied research projects in each year of the program. As part of my current project I am researching tools, methods and practices for assessing our fire department's organizational culture, so that we may determine our readiness to embrace a strategic planning process. As part of my literature review I have spent some time reading your publication, Diagnosing Organizational Culture. To further my understanding of the relationship between organizational culture and strategic planning processes I am attempting to answer the questions noted below. Your willingness to provide your thoughts on these questions will assist me in my research process and will be appreciated.

1.   What role does organizational culture play in the implementation of a strategic planning   process? To what degree should it be considered? *A majority of attempts to change organizations fail because of cultural resistance. Culture is a crucial factor in ensuring a transition from what we are now, or where we are now, and where we want to go, or what we want to be, as a result of strategic planning.*

2.   What, if any, characteristics of an organizations culture impede the development of a strategic planning process? *It is not specific "characteristics" of a culture that inhibit development, it is organizational culture itself. Culture identifies implicit assumptions, norms, behaviors, and artifacts, and all may serve to imnhibit (sic) change.*

3.	What methods and practices do other organizations (non-fire department) utilize to assess organizational culture? *The most well-used assessment instrument is the OCAI.*

4.	What methods and practices are available to modify current organizational cultures that create an environment for the successful development of a strategic planning process? *I have attached an article for you.*

As noted above, this is an applied research project that is applicable to our fire department. This project began as a study of the implementation of a strategic planning process for the department however it is my belief that it is important to begin studying methods and practices to assess the readiness or where we are at prior to embarking on this journey to change how we plan and manage the future. Some believe that Fire Service culture is unique and can be challenging when one makes attempts to implement change. Regardless of the belief system, getting a handle on it and understanding the culture of our fire department will be imperative to preparing for the implementation of a strategic planning process.

Thank you in advance for your time and anticipated cooperation.

 Respectfully,

Chris Tinney

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	v